

The significance of the life of Weary Dunlop

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ANZAC Day is a time for reflection. A time to think about those survivors who sacrificed much of their comrades. An exemplar of the ANZAC spirit is Sir Edward 'Weary' Dunlop.

Dunlop's care for his comrades at arms extended beyond the war years and imprisonment at the hand of the Japanese; his commitment to his men lasted for forty-six years until his death in 1993. True to his word, Weary Dunlop never stopped campaigning for the rights of the returned soldiers and his efforts made a huge difference in the lives of the diggers and their families. Weary Dunlop's care for others was not exclusive though.

The sense of duty to his fellow man was not limited by any boundaries or borders. Encouraged by the Federal MP Casey, Weary was among the first to bridge the gap between Australia and Asia (Ebury: 577).

Despite an incredible busy life Weary made time for any one who needed him, from his private patients, returned servicemen and many other organisations within Australia, not to mention international colleagues and committees for whom he traveled widely. From 1946 when he was elected president of the Ex-POW and Relatives Association to his affiliation with the Anti-Cancer Council and the Victorian Foundation of Drugs and Alcohol, Dunlop worked hard to make a difference. At one stage in his life he had committed to forty different organisations, and never as a 'mere figurehead' (Ebury: 617).

The contribution made to the community by Weary Dunlop was manifold. He led by his stature and legend, and also by deed. Yet he was not a plaster saint, his nature was that of a passionate man, with all that passion encompasses. This was not a negative quality though, it made him a real person to those around him, and probably equipping him for the energy he needed to accomplish all that he did. A friend describes this as 'the beauty about Weary was that he was a person with whom you could identify because he had good and bad points' (Ebury: 598).

Weary Dunlop was a remarkable human being in that he was able to truly and wholeheartedly forgive his enemy, at whose hands he and his comrades were subject to extraordinary suffering. The result of his forgiveness has been the creation of a bond between the citizens of Australia and many Asian nations; Dunlop was a pioneer in forging links which have benefited many.

Weary Dunlop was truly a distinguished Australian. He lived unstintingly to his ethos of duty and service to his fellow man, and always behaved with compassion and dignity to those in need. And by doing so changed the lives of all who came into contact with him,

and all who heard of his work. Weary Dunlop demonstrates the power of one, the difference that one man can make to his community, and beyond.